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Chairman: Mr. Belinga-Eboutou ..... (Cameroon)
later: Mr. Priputen (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Slovakia)

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03-54250 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 105: Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly *(continued)* (A/58/172, A/58/204)

Agenda item 106: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family *(continued)* (A/58/3, A/58/61-E/2003/5, A/58/67-E/2003/49, A/58/79, A/58/229, A/58/159, A/58/153 and A/C.3/58/L.2)

Agenda item 107: Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing *(continued)* (A/58/160)

1. **Ms. Blomquist** (Denmark), speaking as her delegation's youth representative, said that major resources had been allocated to ensuring education for all, counteracting youth unemployment and combating HIV/AIDS, but an integrated youth strategy was still needed to ensure better cooperation between United Nations programmes, youth and Governments. Youth in all regions had valuable contributions to make to strengthen their communities.

2. Although the report of the Secretary-General on promoting youth employment (A/58/229) showed that attention was being given to youth issues, it reflected a position on youth that was rather vague. The recommendations lacked true steps towards action, and most important, the need to strengthen the youth agenda within the United Nations had not been mentioned. Youth issues must be dealt with in a holistic manner; a separate youth programme was not needed if the youth agenda was sufficiently strengthened.

3. The Millennium Declaration was the most important compact ever between rich and poor, and should also be seen as a compact between generations. In 2005, when Member States would evaluate progress on the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of Youth, it would be important to discuss how youth could play a stronger role in ensuring progress of the Millennium Development Goals.

4. Youth must be given special attention in many areas of social development, with HIV/AIDS among the most urgent. The statistics on HIV/AIDS infection in the 15-to-24 age group were horrific. Government commitments to bridge the resource gap, currently estimated at $10 billion, were needed, as was a guarantee of the right of young people to sexual education and access to protection against sexually transmitted diseases. Youth organizations must also become involved in the battle against the epidemic, which had a direct impact on their lives.

5. *Mr. Priputen (Slovakia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

6. **Mr. Paolillo** (Uruguay), speaking on behalf of the members of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the associated countries Bolivia and Chile, said that those countries welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/58/172), and reaffirmed their commitment to the principles and objectives established at the World Summit. They also reaffirmed their commitment to the principles of representative democracy, the rule of law and unconditional respect for civil and political rights, which were the foundation of regional integration.

7. MERCOSUR and its associated countries had based their common social development goals on the Gramado Commitment of September 2000, which was consistent with the Copenhagen Programme of Action. They had also established a mechanism among Ministers of Social Development to identify common priorities and to develop programmes and projects at the national and regional level in such areas as combating poverty and the eradication of child labour. Job creation and increased access to education and health care, with special emphasis on children and vulnerable groups, were key elements in those efforts. In the context of a critical economic situation in most MERCOSUR members and associated countries, their Governments had sought to address the needs of marginalized groups through targeted programmes. They also held the view that social development required participation by all actors, and therefore encouraged the participation of civil society and the cooperative movement in the process of regional development and economic integration. Those efforts also required the assistance of the international community, in particular the Bretton Woods institutions, in opening up international markets.

8. **Mr. de Alba** (Mexico) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement of Peru on behalf of the Rio Group. Social development could not be achieved without the full participation of all sectors of society, and a series of actions were required to prevent vulnerable groups from being marginalized and to provide practical ways to enable disabled persons and the elderly to participate. Mexico had recently passed laws to prevent discrimination against vulnerable groups and had established a national council to prevent discrimination.

9. The initiative to draft an international instrument on the rights of persons with disabilities would be enriched by the experience gained in implementing the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. The Secretary-General's recommendations regarding the content of the international instrument deserved careful consideration. It must also be stressed that a holistic view was needed of the relationship between disability and human rights, and that a disability perspective must be incorporated into national and international development activities.

10. His delegation fully endorsed the concept that ageing must be considered in national development and poverty eradication strategies. The elderly must not be excluded or overlooked by development programmes, and age and gender statistics were essential for policy formulation. He supported the Secretary-General's suggestion that the Statistical Commission could provide the relevant information. The implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing was an evolving process, requiring action at both the national and international levels. Mexico was working on a national plan on ageing to coordinate the activities of various governmental and non-governmental agencies in such areas as legislation, health care, social security, culture and recreation.

11. **Mr. Smith** (Australia), speaking as his delegation's youth representative, said that, while issues for young people throughout the world might appear different on the surface, it had been his experience that they were fundamentally the same. Young people everywhere wanted to feel safe, valued and respected and to have a sense of control and influence over the direction of their lives. Often, however, communities did not know how best to engage, challenge and inspire their youth. In Australia, for example, in the past there had been very active church, sporting and other community groups which allowed young people to interact with their peers, develop role models and establish a sense of belonging to a community. Such structures no longer existed to the same extent, and consequently, young people became detached from the traditional community and felt socially isolated.

12. The shift away from informal cross-generational relationships was resulting in a number of negative outcomes, and for its part, Australia was grappling with defining the role of men and focusing on the education of adolescent males. It was also looking to embrace diversity and enhance understanding among the many communities making up its multicultural population.

13. By the middle of the twenty-first century, more than half the world's population would be comprised of children and the elderly, yet the majority of decisions for those groups were made by those most removed. The value of engaging young people in the decision-making process must be recognized.

14. **Mr. Zeidan** (Lebanon) said that his country firmly upheld the value of human potential and strove constantly to improve the conditions for social development. To accomplish that, it had worked alongside several United Nations bodies, including the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Information and Communications Technology Task Force, with positive results.

15. His delegation appreciated the Secretary-General's reports on cooperatives and social development (A/58/159) and on youth employment (A/58/229). It also placed priority on the rights of disabled persons, especially in the aftermath of a long and painful war that had resulted in an increase in the number and types of disabilities among its people. A comprehensive law had recently been passed by Parliament affirming the rights and dignity of the disabled in Lebanon and its policy of total insertion of the disabled in social and economic life. Beirut had been the host city for the launch of the Arab Decade for People with Disabilities 2003-2012. Lebanon looked forward to participating actively in the Working Group of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Instrument on Persons with Disabilities. An effective instrument would take a

rights-based approach to the situation of the disabled, taking into account the special concerns of disabled persons living in developing countries.

16. **Ms. Edstrom** (World Bank) said that, just as the wall that many people imagined as separating rich countries from poor countries had crumbled on 11 September 2001, the attack on the United Nations office in Baghdad on 19 August had dispelled the notion that a worthy commitment to deliver poverty reduction and the Millennium Development Goals would in itself assuage the sense of social exclusion and imbalance felt by many of the world's people.

17. The World Bank reaffirmed its commitment to a broadened view of development which included efforts to restore balance. Governments, civil society and the private sector had supported the achievements of developing countries over the past 40 years, but more intensive efforts would be needed to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. It had become clear that it was not possible to meet those ambitious goals without fully embedding the social dimensions of development to create societies that empowered poor people to achieve their aspirations for themselves and their families.

18. The 2004 World Development Report explicitly acknowledged that empowerment of poor people was at the heart of better services, by enabling them to monitor and discipline service providers, by amplifying their voice in policymaking and by strengthening incentives for providers to serve the poor. One important means to accomplish that was through clear operational strategies. The World Bank was in the final stages of drafting a social development strategy that would help countries create inclusive and cohesive societies and institutions that were accountable to their people. The World Bank was also increasing its focus on inclusion, protection and empowerment of the vulnerable groups the Committee was currently considering: youth, older persons and people with disabilities.

19. A group of young people from around the globe had recently met with the President of the World Bank in a spirit of peace and mutual respect. They said that they were ready to be partners in the solution, but that they wanted a future based on values of inclusion and cohesion rather than mere economic considerations. The World Bank pledged its support for the values of the United Nations and stood ready to help the Committee to consider ways to meet the core challenges and to take the development agenda beyond Copenhagen.

20. **Mr. Zhang** Yishan (China) said that the promotion of coordinated economic and social development and the achievement of prosperity had always been the shared aspiration of people throughout the world. However, while steady progress had been made since the Summit on Social Development, in many areas formidable challenges remained.

21. The international community had high expectations of the United Nations, which was the most universal, representative and authoritative international organization in the world. It should therefore shoulder the important task of coordinating the efforts of Member States to achieve the comprehensive development of all countries in the short term. At the forty-first session of the Commission for Social Development and the high-level segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, the issues of enhancing international cooperation on social development and eradicating poverty in rural areas had been explored and positive results achieved. Moreover, new headway was being made in the protection of the rights and interests of vulnerable groups.

22. In order to promote balanced and coordinated social development, international cooperation for the eradication of poverty should be strengthened. Over the past 30 years, the number of least developed countries had increased until they now represented over a quarter of the total membership of the United Nations, most of them in Africa and Asia. The widening gap between North and South and the dramatic difference between rich and poor had become an important factor affecting regional and global stability. The international community should work together to achieve the prosperity of all and to eradicate poverty.

23. Efforts were also required to promote the coordinated and comprehensive economic and social development that was essential to overall human development. That required an all-inclusive and holistic vision of development and the United Nations should play an important role in furthering the necessary international cooperation.

24. The Millennium Declaration had established the long-term goal of halting and beginning to reverse the

spread of HIV/AIDS, the scourge of malaria and other major diseases afflicting humanity by the year 2015. The international community should attach greater importance to those issues and the Chinese delegation would be submitting a draft resolution entitled "Strengthening capacity-building in global public health", which it hoped would enjoy the support of Member States.

25. **Mr. Adechi** (Benin) said that social development was a major challenge for the least developed countries, particularly the 34 in Africa, and it seemed evident that they would be unable to achieve the Millennium Development Goals within the allotted time. There was still much to be done to achieve sustainable development and different constraints hindered the efforts made to improve their economies in cooperation with the international development financing institutions.

26. It appeared that the international community was becoming aware of the mechanisms of poverty reproduction, which revealed the structural nature of poverty and proved that it could not be combated effectively without an evaluation of the social impact of economic policies and vice versa. Such an evaluation should make it possible for measures to improve the living conditions of the poor to be more targeted. In that context particular importance should be given to the role of the family, as the basic unit of society.

27. The international community would celebrate the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004. The United Nations had approached issues relating to children, youth, women, the elderly and disabled persons from a social point of view, disregarding the fact that they were all entities that were defined by their essential relationship to the family. That sectoral approach had made it possible to identify a number of specific problems linked to the concept of family. However, as the debate had heightened, it had distanced itself from the traditional family, which was the key to restoring consensus. Consensus could be attained if an effort was made to develop a global approach to the problems affecting the different components of the family. Such an approach would allow the real issues to be clearly identified so that pertinent programmes could be designed at national, regional and global decision-making levels.

28. In that context, the United Nations had a crucial role to play by promoting an in-depth analysis of the issue in order to encourage the people to take ownership of the development process. In Africa, the family could form the basis of efforts to resolve social development problems, because it was one of the most solid and stable institutions. Despite the lack of a consensual definition, the concept of the family was solidly established and commonly accepted in Africa. It was also important to note that the absence of a definition of some social categories such as indigenous peoples and the disabled had not prevented the international community from making efforts in favour of such groups.

29. His delegation was surprised that the staff of the Family Unit had been reduced to only one member and that no budget had been programmed for the period 2004-2005. It proposed that the Secretary-General should establish an ad hoc multidisciplinary committee on the family, composed of independent experts representing all schools of thought; its objective would be to examine the issue and prepare a report for the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, with recommendations on the rationalization of programmes relating to the family and its different components.

30. In August 2003, Benin had organized a preparatory seminar for the anniversary of the International Year of the Family and it would be holding a regional preparatory conference in 2004. Such events should be organized in other regions of the world to culminate with the global event in New York. That would be the occasion for the international community to restore to the family the importance that it merited.

31. **Mr. Wardono** (Indonesia) said that several years had passed since the main United Nations conferences on social development, yet little progress had been achieved; it was important to move forward and transform the policies that had been formulated into concrete actions. Moreover, people should be placed at the centre of development.

32. Policy coherence and partnerships had become important organizing principles of the current development agenda, and he supported the Secretary-General's recommendations on those issues in document A/58/172.

33. His delegation urged the international community to create an enabling environment conducive to

development. The participation of the private sector should be expanded, not only in economic areas but also in the area of social development, and social responsibility and accountability should be incorporated into the programmes of work of all the agencies of the United Nations system.

34. Youth was an essential element of human resources for national development and youth employment should be made a priority within the framework of an employment policy at the macroeconomic level. Indonesia therefore welcomed the lead countries' initiative as set out in annex II of the report of the Secretary-General on "Promoting youth employment" (A/58/229) and had commemorated International Youth Day by launching the Indonesian Youth Employment Network.

35. The issue of ageing had been central in the formulation and implementation of the country's national development policies, because it was important to create an enabling and supportive environment for older persons.

36. Indonesia noted the paradigm shift in promoting and protecting the rights of the disabled from a charity-based approach to a rights-based one. That shift required not only institution- and capacity-building, but also cooperation with the relevant non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Indonesia welcomed the establishment of a Working Group by the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities to prepare and present a draft text. The Working Group should incorporate both a human rights and a development perspective into its consideration of the issue.

37. Indonesia attached great importance to the family as the basic unit of society and was promoting family empowerment programmes. The tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004 should be an occasion for Member States to reaffirm their commitment to the promotion of the family.

38. **Mr. Hyassat** (Jordan) said that his delegation supported the statement made by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Secretary-General's report on the Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/58/172), which contained an analysis of the recommendations made by the Commission for Social Development at its forty-first session on the priority theme "National and international cooperation for social development", would be a valuable asset to developing nations in addressing their socio-economic needs.

39. Due attention had not been paid to the study and evaluation of the negative impact of social development on the family. As the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family approached, further attention should be paid to the family in formulating policies of social and economic development. Against that backdrop, the National Council for Family Affairs had been established in Jordan, spearheaded by Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah, with the goal of improving the quality of life for the Jordanian family and formulating a national strategy for family affairs.

40. The international community must continue to seek appropriate living conditions for people with disabilities, in a manner that fully acknowledged their rights and full participation in development and decision-making. His country welcomed the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities on its second session.

41. It was essential to take the necessary steps to follow up and implement the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, to benefit from the expertise of older persons rather than consider them a burden and to make the best services and social care available to them.

42. **Ms. Tejima** (Japan) said that the different issues relating to social development addressed by the United Nations were challenges to both developing and developed countries, because all countries wished to improve the living standards of all members of society. Consequently, her delegation supported the recommendation contained in paragraph 49 of the Secretary-General's report (A/58/172). The Government of Japan affirmed its determination to implement the recommendations of the World Summit for Social Development and had been making efforts to address relevant issues from different perspectives.

43. With regard to the issue of disabled persons, Japan was a member of the Working Group formed by the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and

Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities to prepare a draft text of the convention. It had also hosted four international conferences on the issue in October 2002 and was working with all stakeholders while increasing its cooperation with non-governmental organizations specializing in issues relating to disability. A more active engagement in the area by all United Nations agencies was needed and the necessary capacity of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs should be strengthened.

44. Her delegation appreciated the road map for the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing contained in the report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/58/160). As a country whose population was ageing with unprecedented speed, Japan had been revising its socio-economic system and had initiated reforms of its pensions and medical care system. It considered that such reforms were consistent with the road map and hoped that the ideas behind its efforts to tackle the issue of ageing would be of use to the international community.

45. **Mr. Knyazhinskiy** (Russian Federation) said that poverty eradication, which was a social priority of his Government, could not be achieved in the absence of economic growth, partnership between State, business and civil society and sustainable employment policies at the federal level. Implementation of the Russian Federation's new social and economic development programme should lead to poverty reduction by 2006, as well as improved welfare protection for the population. There were also plans to create a more effective social services system while strengthening democratic institutions and civil society.

46. The Russian Federation appreciated the work of the Commission on Social Development, which should remain the main coordinating body on issues relating to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family. In that connection, and with a view to increasing country-level effectiveness of international cooperation under United Nations auspices, there must be targeted economic and social assistance for countries in need. Politicization only risked undermining common efforts, which was why global consensus on social issues must be preserved.

47. With regard to disabled persons, the Russian Federation was keen to participate in negotiations on a comprehensive convention to promote and protect their rights. The year 2003 had been proclaimed the Year of Disabled Persons, with the necessary implementation mechanisms having been established by presidential decree. The Russian Federation also fully supported the Organization's efforts to intensify international cooperation to strengthen the family and was currently making plans to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Year of the Family. A federal programme had also been launched to provide assistance to young families, while recent legislative reforms benefited those on low incomes. Service coverage in the social sector was also being widened to benefit families with children.

48. In follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing, the Russian Federation had undertaken far-reaching reforms of its pension system, with greater individual choice of investment options now available to the population at large.

49. **Mr. Gautam** (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) noted the importance of world social development, in particular family-related issues, to the mission of UNICEF. The tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004 held special importance for his organization as it implemented its mandate in keeping with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the preamble of which recognized the central role played by the family.

50. Since the first International Year of the Family in 1994, while many families had seen their incomes increase, a large number still lived in dire poverty and the disparity between rich and poor was growing. Families were having to cope with new stresses such as urbanization, globalization, conflict and displacement; as a result of the impact of HIV/AIDS, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa, many traditional forms of families were being destroyed and new forms of families and caring practices were emerging. Over 13 million children had lost one or both parents because of HIV/AIDS and were being raised by relatives, including older siblings who were themselves children. More than 1 million children had been orphaned or separated from their families as a direct result of war. In addition, due to the stress of economic transition on families, in Central and Eastern Europe the number of children being raised in institutions exceeded 2 million and continued to grow.

51. The family remained the most durable and caring environment for raising children and deserved full

attention and support. Strengthening families would contribute greatly to UNICEF's mission to ensure that every child survived and thrived and became a productive member of society. In order to strengthen families, the rights of children and women must be protected by encouraging gender equity and by promoting responsible fatherhood, shared parenting and women's rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child stressed States parties' obligation to provide for the well-being of children. States could support families by making health services more accessible, developing the skills and capacities of families, removing barriers to the active involvement of fathers and supporting the legal status of women as mothers, wives, heads of households and community leaders.

52. In keeping with its view of the family as the best environment for the realization of the rights of children, UNICEF was developing an action plan for the International Year of the Family, which would be discussed at its Executive Board meeting in January 2004. The main elements of the plan included strengthening of families through UNICEF's global programmes and implementation of the Millennium Development Goals; national and regional initiatives for data collection, information exchange and advocacy; underlining the importance of strengthening families in the context of United Nations country-level operational activities; innovative assistance for children of poor families, especially AIDS orphans, child soldiers and other victims of armed conflict and family disintegration; and encouragement and support to UNICEF staff associations for strengthening families.

53. He looked forward to 2004 as a year when Governments, civil society and international organizations would seize every opportunity to strengthen families in order to protect the rights of all children everywhere. UNICEF would redouble its efforts to strengthen families during the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond in order to help build a world truly fit for children.

54. **Mr. Langmore** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/58/172), which identified the crucial strategies for putting people at the centre of development but also noted the growing inequalities among as well as within countries. Such inequalities could be attributed to a lack of policy coherence, the conflict between national macroeconomic policies and social goals and the growing tendency to make long-term social development objectives subordinate to short-term economic policy. However, although increasing global economic and financial interdependence had reduced the scope for independent national action, it had also increased capacity for effective collective decision-making at the international level to achieve social development objectives.

55. All countries, in accordance with the commitments made at the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, should include employment growth and poverty reduction in their macroeconomic goals and implement rigorous policies to achieve those goals, which would increase the pace of national socio-economic development and be mutually reinforcing. The international environment would therefore become more conducive to national social progress and economic growth.

56. Despite international recognition of the need for such an approach and the commitments contained in the Millennium Development Goals, employment growth and poverty reduction still were not included in some poverty reduction strategy programmes and were not always encouraged by international financial institutions. Although official development assistance had been increased, violent conflict and military expenditure had diverted scarce resources at a time when global unemployment and poverty continued to increase. The work of the Youth Employment Network was therefore of crucial importance, and action to support and regulate cooperatives effectively was also one of hundreds of ways to encourage effective socio-economic functioning and employment growth.

57. With regard to participation, despite significant advances in consultation during the preparation and implementation of poverty reduction strategy programmes, in many countries there was still scope for strengthening the engagement of parliaments and civil society groups such as trade unions, business organizations, churches and community associations. Reducing the global democratic deficit would also be likely to contribute to greater policy coherence.

58. **Mr. Scholvinck** (Director, Division for Social Policy and Development), referring to the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, stressed his Division's continued commitment to the family as a key element for social protection of the individual. Numerous activities had been planned: a statement would be made by the Secretary-General on 4 December 2003 and discussions regarding other possible activities were under way; an expert group on monitoring family issues would meet from 10 to 12 December 2003; a global study on trends affecting families in all regions of the world would be disseminated as soon as it was ready; in early 2004 a recently completed study on HIV/AIDS and the family would be distributed and a policy workshop on the well-being of the family would be held, probably in Cape Town; a report on family indicators had been completed and would soon be published in all official languages. On the International Day of Families itself, activities would be held at Headquarters in cooperation with the Department of Public Information and non-governmental organization partners; preparation for those activities would begin in early 2004.

59. In reply to the representative of Egypt, he said that one staff member from his Division worked full-time on family issues. He believed, however, that mainstreaming the family in all aspects of the Division's work was preferable to a compartmentalized approach, given the role that the family played in issues such as youth, the disabled, ageing and conflict prevention. That would allow for a more coherent and comprehensive use of the Division's resources. Finally, in reply to the representative of Switzerland, he said that 35 Member States had responded to the Secretary-General's request for information in the context of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family.

60. **Mr. Roshdy** (Egypt) thanked the Director for the additional information provided and said that he might return to that issue once his delegation had had an opportunity to study the information.

61. **Ms. Elisha** (Benin) expressed concern about the future of the International Year of the Family and family issues, since no budget had been allocated for 2004-2005. Her delegation strongly believed resources for family-related issues should be not only renewed but increased.

62. **Ms. Mohamed Ahmed** (Sudan) wondered whether one full-time staff member was enough to deal adequately with family-related issues. She asked whether any consideration had been given to upgrading the Family Unit to a division in order to reflect its importance and said she would welcome information on plans to ensure continued action beyond the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family.

63. **Mr. Scholvinck** (Director, Division for Social Policy and Development) reiterated that mainstreaming of family-related issues would allow for all the resources of the Division to be used as appropriate to deal with them. All the Division's work and reports would include the family perspective as appropriate just as, for example, UNICEF included family issues in its work to protect children. The Division's staff should be able to address all issues as necessary without the need for creating separate units or divisions. Accordingly, the Division's work in the areas of youth, the disabled, ageing and conflict situations would incorporate a family perspective.

64. **Mr. Cumberbatch** (Cuba) referred to a question he had raised at the previous meeting concerning the need for international cooperation in achieving social development.

65. **Mr. Scholvinck** (Director, Division for Social Policy and Development) noted that section C of the Secretary-General's report (A/58/172) highlighted the vital role of international cooperation in meeting development goals and creating an enabling environment.

66. **Ms. Abdul Aziz** (Malaysia) enquired about the internal organization of resources allocated to the issues of youth, the disabled, ageing and the family; for example, were there focal points and/or units for each of those issues?

67. **Mr. Scholvinck** (Director, Division for Social Policy and Development) said that he had reorganized the Division to include four focal points for each of the issues of youth, ageing, the family and the disabled rather than having four separate units; those issues were closely related and should be dealt with as needed in a cooperative, coherent and complementary manner to optimize use of available human resources.

68. **Ms. Al Haj Ali** (Syrian Arab Republic) said it was her impression that the Secretariat's task was to implement policies mandated by the General Assembly

through its various resolutions and she wondered whether any mandate had been provided by the General Assembly with regard to mainstreaming of family issues.

69. **Mr. Scholvinck** (Director, Division for Social Policy and Development) said that although the General Assembly provided overall direction for the work of the Secretariat, the latter could deal with matters that were considered to be related and pertinent. Accordingly, he would maintain the focus on family-related issues by mainstreaming them in the Division's work.

70. **Mr. Gibbons** (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the Presidency of the European Union, reiterated the European Union's active support for the Secretary-General's efforts to reform and increase the effectiveness of the Secretariat, which continued to be the subject of high-level discussions at the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.